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MR. RICHARD CARLILE, DORCHESTER GAOL.

SIR,

Bradford, May, 9, 1825.

THE Reverend N. J. Heinekin, Minister of the Unitarian Chapel, in this place, is in the habit of delivering yearly a course of Lectures, on theological subjects, in the early part of the year. The course announced for the present season consists of eleven Lectures, one to be delivered every fortnight, and the second which was delivered on the 23rd day of January last is entitled, "A Discourse on the Evidence of a Divine Superintendence exhibited in the Works of Nature, and in the Affairs of the World." About a fortnight before the delivery of this Lecture, a note was sent to Mr. Heinekin to the effect, and as nearly as I can recollect in the words, following:

"If Mr. Heinekin has no objection to furnish a MS. copy of his second Lecture, for the purpose of being copied, (after delivery,) an answer to it will be attempted upon the following conditions, viz:

"1st. That the Lecture and answer may be published or not as Mr. H. may think proper.

"2nd. That the answerer's name shall be concealed, as his circumstances in life might be injured by the influence and odium of an intolerant neighbourhood, still premising, that Mr. H. should be acquainted with the name of the answerer, under a pledge of Secresy.

"The intended answer shall be in as temperate and candid a tone as Mr. H.'s own Lectures."

"Bradford, Jan. 9, 1825."

No direct answer was given to this note, but it was understood soon after the Delivery of the Lecture, that it would be published, which has since been done. From the publication it is inferred that Mr. H., in that true spirit of fair and liberal controversy, for which he is celebrated in his own neighbourhood, intends to afford any opponent an

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opportunity of discussing the subject. The writer of the note conceiving himself under these circumstances pledged to an answer, sends the following for the pages of the Republican. As it is probable that with the exception of the Republicans in Bradford and its neighbourhood few of them will see Mr. H.'s Lecture as published by himself and as it is the fairest way to give each party the advantage of stating his own argument in his own words, the Lecture is first given from a printed Copy, with the addition of numbers to the paragraphs for the sake of more easy reference.

Yours, &c.,

LEUCIPPUS.

THE DIVINE GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD.

PSALM XIV. 1.

“THE FOOL HATH SAID IN HIS HEART THERE IS NO GOD.”

1. ALTHOUGH the term fool, used by the writer of this Psalm, may be very correctly applied in its full force to those who are infidels in practice; yet, according to the usual acceptation of the word, it is not, perhaps, exactly appropriate to those, who although infidels in theory, yet are unimpeachable in their moral conduct. There have been, and it is a lamentable fact there still are, many persons possessed of respectable natural talents, and even some who have arrived at no ordinary degree of eminence in acquired knowledge, who, nevertheless, in consequence of some obliquity in their views, perversion of their judgment, or extravagant expectations of impossible demonstration, have not only doubted, but even boldly denied the existence of an Omniscient and Omnipotent Creator and Governor of the universe. That unbelievers in the Divine existence should have been numerous among the Heathen nations, is not greatly to be wondered at, when the general ignorance of the world respecting moral truth, is considered; and that many of the better informed Heathen *Sages* should have been unable, by the mere light of philosophy, to infer the existence and perfections of a Supreme Being, is not very surprising. Yet, there were, even in this benighted state of the world, some very splendid exceptions, not only to the vulgar ignorance and superstition but also to the more refined philosophical infidelity.

2. Socrates, Plato, Cicero, and several other illustrious men, appear to have made as great advances in the knowledge and belief of a Supreme Intelligence, as the unaided efforts of human reason were capable of reaching. On the acknowledged existence of a great First Cause, possessed of unbounded power, wis-

dom, and goodness, the moral systems of Socrates, Plato, and other eminent sages, were chiefly grounded, although *they* also yielded to the popular notion of a multiplicity of inferior gods: and so deeply interested was the great and learned Cicero, in the support of this most important doctrine, that he wrote an elaborate treatise, in order to combat and rectify the erroneous notions which were prevalent among the various philosophical schools, and more especially among the Epicureans, respecting a Supreme Being. This highly valuable treatise has been handed down to the present times; and the devout earnestness of this truly wise and excellent man, ought to chastise the levity, if it cannot correct the absurdity, of modern infidelity. What would have been the light and joy diffused over the minds of these illustrious philosophers, if they had been made acquainted with the sublime doctrines of the Christian revelation? They would not, like some Sciolists in modern times, have employed the powers of their enlarged understandings in the invention of wild and comfortless theories, calculated, if not intended, to paralyze the exertions, to shroud the views, and to destroy the joyful expectations of mankind. With exultation they would have hailed the appearance of the great Sun of Righteousness, and gratefully have acknowledged, that he had risen upon a benighted world, with healing in his beams.

3. But there have been, and there still are, in the Christian world, persons of undoubted talent, who have not only proudly despised the invaluable light of a Divine revelation, but whose philosophy has been of such a short-sighted and feeble nature, that they have been unable, or unwilling, to behold the innumerable proofs of Divine power, wisdom and goodness, which are every where displayed in the works of nature, and constantly illustrated by the general events, and moral circumstances of the world. In many parts of the Continent, but more especially in France, and even also in this Island, which has for a long time enjoyed superior advantages for religious investigation, there have been many speculative men, who, either in consequence of contemplating the *corruptions* of Christianity, or viewing *the pure truths* of the gospel through a distorting medium, have become Deists, or unbelievers in a divine revelation; but the number of Atheists, or unbelievers in the Divine existence, even among the professed Pyrrhonists, or universal doubters of France, and other parts of the Continent, has been comparatively small. Some, however, there have been of this class, who have exercised their talents in endeavouring to disprove the Divine existence and government; or, in other words, in attempting to extinguish, not only the light of revelation, but also the light of reason, of nature, and of common sense. Among those who have been thus infatuated, the Count de Mirabeau, a late French writer of no despicable genius, stands conspicuous, and he has unhappily been fol-

lowed by some persons in this kingdom, calling themselves philosophers; who, without even the shadow of his abilities, have not only adopted, and zealously propagated, the most absurd and disgusting of his tenets, but have proclaimed them in such coarse and offensive language, that the Count himself, (who appears to have been really a serious, although strangely deluded enquirer after truth,) would, doubtless, have cried shame upon such rude and arrogant disciples. *His* own language is urbane and elegant, and he brings forwards his most obnoxious sentiments with such a degree of delicacy and feeling, as to excite the deepest regret, that a man, possessed of such talents for the advancement of truth and piety in the world, should, from some obliquity of the judgment, have been led to prostitute those talents to the support and propagation of such frightful and deadly errors. Having denied the existence of a superintending Deity, the French Atheist finds himself to be exactly in the situation of that ancient philosopher, who, having denied that the earth was suspended in empty space, by the hand of almighty power, gravely asserted, that it was placed on the back of an elephant; but when asked where the elephant was to stand, answered, that it probably was placed on the back of a tortoise; and when further pressed with the enquiry where the tortoise was to stand, very sagaciously placed it on the back of an eagle, and thought that he had thus surmounted every difficulty, without for a moment reflecting, that he had been obliged to revert to the first position; and that, even according to his own ridiculous theory, the earth, the elephant, the tortoise and the eagle, were still suspended in empty space. In like manner, the French philosopher finds, that, without a First Cause, he cannot account for any thing; but rather than acknowledge a self-existent, omnipotent, and omniscient Deity, he boldly introduces a heterogeneous creature of his own fancy, which he calls *nature*, and considers as the prolific, bountiful, and instinctive mother of all things, coeval and correlative with the universe: thus he deifies the *works* of an Almighty, intelligent Being, instead of humbly adoring that Being himself; and like the silly theorist before alluded to, endeavours to account for an effect, without any rational cause. Indeed, the Count de Mirabeau's reasoning (if reasoning it can be called) upon this subject, as well as that of all who have trodden in the same path, is not only so unphilosophical, but so shallow, that it is truly wonderful how even the most vulgar intellect can be for a moment seduced by such absurd rhapsodies. When, also, this writer treats of the advantages of moral virtue, which he very plausibly dresses up in strong and glowing language, he, like others of the same school, derives all his motives from expediency and utility. It is, say *these* philosophers, a man's present interest to be virtuous; and the consciousness of acting right, is an ample reward to a well constituted mind. To the simple position, that to a certain degree, virtue is,

or rather ought to be its own reward, no objection can reasonably be made; but what, it must be asked, is the real fact? In a world constituted like the present, would the consciousness of integrity be of itself a sufficiently powerful stimulus to virtuous conduct, in spite of every difficulty and obstruction, provided there were no hope or prospect of future reward? And would not the growth of a merely philosophical virtue be very soon stunted by the natural desire of enervating, although not absolutely criminal indulgences. If man were purely a spiritual being, this might indeed be the case; but, connected as he is with this ever agitated and uncertain state, the paramount utility of virtue would soon be lost sight of in the present gratification, which a more relaxed discipline would afford. In the present mixed and imperfect state, the strictest virtue, immersed in poverty, dressed in rags, and without the hope of a future reward, would have but little chance of attracting followers, when set in opposition to relaxed morality, glittering in gold and jewels, and holding out the full cup of present enjoyment. And although under all possible circumstances the real value of virtue is inestimable; yet if there were to be no future reward, the exercise of habitual self-denial, in which the perfection of Christian virtue chiefly consists, would be in the highest degree romantic, because it would be a voluntary sacrifice of many (not unreasonable) present gratifications, to a theoretical purity of mind, which, after a seed-time of sorrow, must consign all its ripening fruits to the withering blast of eternal death. If such were to be the real condition of man, the language of the epicure—"Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," would be the language both of nature and of reason. But the infidel holds out a *speculative*, instead of a *real* motive to virtue, when he speaks only of its present reward; and he makes man a curious, but almost useless piece of animal machinery, which, if formed of superior materials, may be wound up to something like moral feeling; but if of inferior, only clumsily performs its little destined revolutions; beats for a very short day; and then stops for ever.

4. But, says this philosopher, although there will be no future life, (and consequently no future reward of virtue) yet the *memory* of the virtuous will live to future ages, and their names will be engraven on tablets more durable than brass; and the present gratification of such a prospective reputation ought to be deemed a sufficient recompence by every well constituted mind; so that a *name*; and nothing but an empty *name*; will be the high future reward of philosophical virtue, and all that will remain of that intellectual being, whose proud and daring spirit once attempted to subvert the throne of the universe! How pregnant must such a hope be with joy and comfort, to the being who believes that at death he shall be annihilated and lost for ever! but it may be that even in *this* hope, the childish vanity of the Atheist may be deceived. The judgment which *he* has passed upon *himself*, and

the opinion which others may choose to form respecting him, may be very widely different. *He* may fondly, and perhaps reasonably, expect to be handed down to future ages as an upright citizen and a patriot; but *the historian*, over whom he has no controul, may, either from mere wantonness, prejudice, or party spirit, determine to hold up his name to the execration of posterity, as a venal slave, or an unprincipled sycophant; and thus by the gall of some surly cynic, his expected glory may be converted into perpetual disgrace and contempt. This, then, appears to be the melancholy sum and substance of the Atheist's frightful creed. He proudly rejects the sublime doctrine of an all-wise, powerful, and benevolent Deity, and throws himself upon what he calls the bosom of kind nature; whose arms, like the feelers of a blind polypus, are curiously spread over a coeval and coefficient, but unintelligent universe, by a species of animal instinct; without motive, and without object. Instead of acknowledging the powerful influence of Christian precepts and motives in the advancement and perfection of human virtue, he makes *expediency and utility* the chief purposes of moral conduct; and the hope of securing a little note of admiration in the page of history, the only stimulus to a virtuous ambition; and with respect to futurity, he wontonly throws away the glorious expectation of immortality, and the animating promise of eternal felicity, and voluntarily plunges all the boasted powers of his reason into the dreadful gulph of annihilation. Can, then, such hideous opinions present any charms to a truly rational mind? Or, have sincere believers in the Divine existence, and in the truth of Divine revelation, any reason to tremble for the foundations of their faith, when assailed by such contemptible machinery? Whatever may be his pretensions, that man surely must be in the mere infancy of his wisdom, who can allow the light of nature, of reason, and of revelation, to be shut out from his eyes by the flimsy veil of such a sophistical and insane philosophy; to the advocates for which, that part of the Apostle Paul's description of the Heathen world, may be considered as not inapplicable, in which he says—"That which may be known of God is manifest among them; for God hath manifested it unto them; for from the creation of the world, the invisible things of him are clearly perceived, being understood by the things which are made, even his eternal power and providence, so that they are without excuse; because, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, nor gave him thanks; but became vain in their reasonings, and their inconsiderate heart was darkened; professing themselves to be wise they became fools." This passage I have quoted from the *improved version*, because it seems to convey the Apostle's meaning more clearly than the common translation, but the real sense of the words is the same in both versions; and the passage appeared to be so applicable to modern Infidelity, as well as to Heathen Idolatry, that I could not

refrain from introducing it in confirmation of the observations which I have already made, and of those which are to follow.

5. Were we not assured of the fact, it would be incredible, that any person of common understanding, and of common observation, and more especially that any person possessed of a well informed and enquiring mind, should for a moment call in question the existence of a superintending Deity; although his understanding may be greatly perplexed, when he attempts to unravel the *mode* of that existence—when we seriously contemplate the works of nature which surround us, the acknowledgement of a First Cause is inevitable; and the conviction that this First Cause is a self-existent, omnipotent, and omniscient Being, appears to be the necessary consequence of such an acknowledgement. We see proofs of unrivalled power, wisdom, and goodness, stamped in obvious and indelible characters on every object we behold; and whether we contemplate the heavens above our heads, the earth beneath our feet, or the various classes of animals, vegetables, and minerals, which are continually presenting themselves to our notice, the sublime and important truth that there is an Omniscient God, who created and upholds all things by the Word of his Power, irresistibly forces itself upon our reason.

6. But the Divine perfections are demonstrated in a no less certain, although less obvious manner, in the *government* of that world, which Supreme Power has formed; and without such a continual superintendence, the earth which we inhabit would soon become a frightful scene of anarchy and confusion. We shall see the force of this remark, if we attentively consider in the First place, how the Divine perfections are displayed in the general order of nature, and the common dispensations of providence.—In the wonderful accuracy of arrangement, and in the application of seasonable checks and counterpoises, to the overwhelming power of general laws, the existence and perfections of a Supreme Governor are indisputably manifested; and without the constant superintendence of Infinite Wisdom, some of the most common agents in nature would acquire such a predominating influence, as would involve the universal system in disorder and ruin; but under the perfect direction of Supreme power, wisdom and goodness, every thing preserves its destined station; every being performs his appointed office; and every event produces its intended purpose; universal order, harmony, and happiness, are the unvarying objects of the Divine administration; and partial evils, are only temporary deviations from that benevolent law, which has ordained that all things shall contribute to the general welfare. Every part both of the animate and inanimate creation, we may clearly see, is destined for some important purpose, and perfectly adapted to the accomplishment of that purpose. Thus the sun, whatever may be the nature and individual object of its own structure, is, we know, peculiarly calculated for diffusing light

and heat to those worlds which revolve around it; and without its constant influence, the earth which we inhabit, as well as all the others belonging to our system, would become an unproductive chaos. By the atmosphere which surrounds the globe, its inhabitants are continually supplied with the springs of life; by the constant operation of fixed and general laws, this great reservoir of nature is guarded against corruption; and by the storms and tempests to which it is occasionally subject, it is furnished with an infallible remedy for the partial disorders to which it is exposed. By the waters of the ocean, the earth is supplied with springs, and fertilized by the clouds and dews which are exhaled by the sun; and the waters of the ocean are again replenished by the constant influx of rivers and springs, so that the balance is accurately and perpetually preserved. Each species among the innumerable classes of the vegetable creation, is adapted to some peculiar purpose, and intended either for food, for the preservation of health, for ornament, for general utility, for the gratification of the animal senses, or for the common demands of social life. The various tribes of animals, from the most minute insect, and the meanest reptile, to the mighty elephant, and the rational creature, man, has its destined offices to perform, during the period assigned for its existence; and is amply furnished with the means necessary for the performance of those offices. Some, by an instinctive ferocity, are led to seek support by preying on others of an imbecile nature, and thus give a continual check to that general tendency to increase, which, if unimpeded, would destroy the accurate and necessary balance of nature. The habits and propensities of these various tribes are well suited to the climates and soils which they are destined to inhabit, and to the peculiar circumstances in which they are placed; so that, by superior sagacity, the wilder species of animals are enabled to compensate for the want of that fostering care, which the domestic tribes experience from mankind. Those living creatures which were intended for the sustenance of man, or for the instruments either of his pleasures or necessities, are, by the texture of their bodies, the instinctive faculties of their nature, their modes of existence, and the peculiar qualities with which they are endowed, admirably calculated for answering the claims of social and domestic life; and the beasts which are daily slaughtered for our food, are more amply provided with the means of sustenance, than the wild tyrants of the forest, who are intended to check, rather than to promote the population of the earth. These latter classes happily for the world, are few; and the individuals which compose them are not gregarious; for, if they were, such ferocity, united with such combined power, would soon depopulate the globe, and convert the most fruitful land into a wilderness. So nicely is the balance of nature preserved, (even in those regions which are uninhabited by mankind) that no one species of the

wilder animals, appears so far to predominate, as utterly to extirpate the rest; and man, the appointed sovereign of the lower creation, when he boldly plunges into the deep recesses of the unexplored forest, finds no antagonist sufficiently hardy, to brave the terrors of his associated powers; but, according to his original destiny, is allowed to reign the undisputed sovereign over the brute creation. Nor is *man* less subject than the other tribes of animals, to the general order of nature. There are few, perhaps no cases, in which human beings are seen living absolutely in a state of solitary and insulated independence; and the power of uncivilized man over the beasts of the desert, depends not on his superior strength, (for this would in numberless instances be overmatched) nor on his superior wisdom, (for the savage of the forest has, perhaps, little advantage in this respect, over the instinctive sagacity of the brute) but his empire depends on the associations of individual power, and skill, and courage; so that even among the most barbarous tribes, a general union of objects, interests, and counsels, is established; and it is in consequence of this union, that man is enabled to overawe and subdue the fiercest among the carnivorous animals.—The arrows of the wild hunter, are not half so formidable, as the fangs of the hungry tiger: but they are directed by acquired skill, and give dismaying proofs of a power, which, although itself invisible, can from a distance inflict the strokes of its vengeance.

7. But when men are more closely associated in civilized society, a still more accurate adjustment of nature's balance becomes necessary. By such a union of discordant motives, interests, feelings, and objects, the machinery of human action is rendered much more complex, and larger sacrifices must necessarily be made to the general welfare; but in exactly the same proportion, much larger demands may be made on the common stock of tributary benefits: and when mankind are classed into nations and communities, each of these powerful associations directs its views to different objects; and although the individuals which compose each class may be governed by the same general interest, yet the designs of the larger bodies must often come into collision. Hence, arise the wars and contests which prevail among civilized nations, and man becomes the fiercest enemy of his brother man; not because they are divided by seas, and mountains, and rivers; but because that class to which each belongs, is desirous of usurping superior power; or, avariciously grasps after superior advantages. But even in those changes, which the bad passions of men occasion among the nations of the earth, the power, wisdom, and goodness of God are continually displayed; although, to the inattentive observer, such events may appear to be serious impeachments of the Divine perfections. To the considerate mind, the history of the world will clearly prove, that "God changeth the times and the seasons; that he removeth

kings, and setteth up kings: that he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding; and that he revealeth the deep and secret things, and knoweth what is in darkness."

8. Dreadful as have been the commotions, by which states and empires were in past times shaken or destroyed; yet, whoever attentively compares the present with the former circumstances of the world, will see that the general tendency of these great political changes has been towards the establishment of better government, and more perfect happiness among the nations of the earth. Light and knowledge, liberty and virtue, have been seen to spring from behind the darkest clouds of ignorance and vice, oppression and misery. The progress of civilization and literature, of political and religious liberty, of commercial and agricultural knowledge, of the most useful arts and sciences, and of wholesome and liberal legislation, has been, without doubt, greatly promoted by the alarming changes which have taken place among the kingdoms of the earth. Political convulsions, and military conquests, have been the occasion of extensive emigrations; and by such emigrations, civilization and knowledge, have been conveyed to tribes, which were before sunk in ignorance and barbarism. Among the extraordinary revolutions of past ages, we have seen old and long established dynasties overturned by the bold hands of usurpers; and these again displaced either by more powerful rivals, by popular tumult, or by foreign force; and the picture of human sufferings, which such changes have presented to the contemplative mind, has appeared to be overloaded with dark and dismal shades. The philanthropist has sometimes seen happiness banished from the distracted world, and has wept over the melancholy prospect of human misery, which, to his gloomy imagination, has appeared interminable; but he has judged only from the present aspect of circumstances—he has been unable to unroll the vast schedule of Divine Providence, and to behold the distant bearings of passing events—he has seen only the existing evil, and has had little or no idea of the future good, which has been secretly kindling in this region of darkness. But to those who exclaim that past times were better than the present, and consider the natural and political evils of the world as an impeachment of the Divine wisdom and benevolence, the question may fairly be put, whether, with all its acknowledged blemishes, they must not consider the present state of society as far more favourable to knowledge, virtue, and happiness, than that which the faithful pen of history has recorded to have been the condition of ancient governments; of the immensely extended and oppressive Roman empire; or even of the more polished, but no less ambitious, and turbulent Grecian states. Of such a complainant, the enquiry may very properly be made,

whether, with all his partiality towards former times, he would willingly barter the present enjoyments of society, (imperfect as they may appear,) for the scanty and uncertain advantages of personal, domestic, and public liberty, knowledge, and happiness, which were possessed under those governments, where power was the only object, and war almost the only profession, which could render a man prosperous or honourable. Yet, notwithstanding some considerable advances towards improvement, even the present times have afforded such a lamentable exhibition of the ferocious nature of military virtue, as sufficiently to prove, that a nation of warriors will always be the frightful scourge of others, and the wretched tormentor of itself; and exactly such were nearly all the nations of former times. War, with all its horrors, was their delight; and peace, with all its blessings, was the object of their aversion. Modern kingdoms have hitherto trodden very closely in the polluted footsteps of their ancestors; they have already paid much; and will probably pay still more; as the price of political pride and folly; and must, perhaps, experience still greater miseries, before the minds of the thoughtless multitude will be weaned from their preposterous and savage thirst after military glory; a glory which, while it may communicate temporary splendour and advantage to the few, must always prove more fatal than an eastern blast to the many. Although, however, our own times have lamentably proved, that the principles which nourish a warlike spirit are still in existence; yet, it is evident, that in most cases, the features of war have been considerably changed; conflicts are not now, as they were formerly, pursued to extermination; and the nations of the earth feeling, or pretending to feel, the advantages of peace, now affect to draw their swords only in what they call a just cause; whereas, in former times, very few scruples were entertained concerning the morality of bloodshed: the only question was respecting its policy; and the total annihilation of cities and empires was decreed by senates and councils, with much less ceremony than the infliction of capital punishment on the public transgressors of modern times. Whatever may be their real sentiments and inclinations, yet there are few; perhaps none, among the nations now existing on the earth, who actually venerate the power of the sword, and openly proclaim their desire after universal dominion; and there are none who do not in words acknowledge, that peace is more desirable than war, although their theory and their practice are so often at open variance. Policy, without doubt, has now a considerable influence in curbing the ambition of princes and statesmen; but much may also be justly attributed to an improved state of society; in which, after the severe discipline of ages the more thoughtful part of mankind have been brought to acknowledge, that peace is a blessing, for the loss of which no military spoils, nor trophies, can be considered as affording a rational compensation. However imperfectly

this lesson may be even now learnt; yet the dreadful calamities which have been lately abroad in the earth, have, without doubt, done much towards teaching the people who were its miserable engines, that war, which is the sport of statesmen, is fatal to public virtue, and to public happiness. But as in the animal frame, severe disorders are sometimes necessary to the eventual establishment of more perfect health; so in the body politic, the experience of present times and past ages of the world, seems to justify the conclusion, that wars and commotions, however lamentable in their present effects, are ultimately the means of introducing a better order in society, and a more and a more general diffusion of civil and religious rights. Little as public communities have hitherto been influenced by the enlarged and benevolent spirit of Christianity, yet the progressive spread of this peaceful religion must have a necessary, although perhaps imperceptible, tendency to destroy the sinews of war, by restraining the passions of the people, subduing the pride and ambition of statesmen, and establishing the dominion of reason and justice. But to our imperfect understandings, the ways of Providence, with respect to the world at large, must necessarily appear dark and mysterious, because we can only comprehend a few of the connections between remote causes and future effects, especially, when the whole world is the theatre on which these dispensations are displaying themselves, and the whole human race are the actors; employed in carrying on the magnificent drama. In such an intricate and extensive scene, those who are the most prominent agents, perform their destined parts without a knowledge of the final catastrophe, and with very imperfect conceptions of the tendency and future results even of their own actions. Time alone can develop the vast plans of Divine Providence; and men, in future ages, will, without doubt, be as much astonished at the folly and perverseness, of those, who, in the present day, have been the disturbers the public peace, as we now are at the savage barbarity, the military madness, and the lawless ambition, of former times, whereby some of the most flourishing cities and empires of the world have been totally destroyed. The discipline of *individuals*, is the work not of an hour nor of a day, it requires the whole term of human life; but the discipline of *nations* and *communities*, demands the revolution of ages, because it is only by the gradual accumulations of individual knowledge and virtue, that large associations are removed from barbarism, and acquire general principles of public justice and integrity. If, then, an

actual tendency towards amelioration in the state of society can be perceived, (although it may be but faintly,) such a tendency will be sufficient to confirm the doctrine of a superintending Providence, over the general affairs of the world; and to an attentive observer of events, the Divine power, wisdom, and goodness, will be clearly manifest in many of those circumstances, which to others appear to be shrouded in mystery and darkness. But the Divine superintendence over human affairs is rendered more obvious by the circumstances of individuals, because such events come more within the reach of private observation. Let each person trace the circumstances of his life from that period when his reasoning powers first began to expand, and he will see that through the whole of his intricate journey, he has been supported, protected and guided, by the parental care of his beneficent Creator. The Almighty Being, who at first communicated his vital powers, has continued them in activity. The faculties of his mind have been enlarged, not by any voluntary act of his own, but by the continued operation of that influence, which originally communicated the power of thought to insensible matter—his corporeal faculties have been gradually strengthened, and adapted to the common purposes of life, not by any inherent self-existent principle, but by the continual operation of those laws, which the great Creator has laid down for the government of organized matter. Let this supporting influence be only for a moment withdrawn, and the connection between the intellectual and corporeal powers will instantly cease. Whatever may become of the former, the latter must immediately decay, and mingle with the common dust of the earth—without such a constant superintendence, human life could be only the existence of a moment. A superfluity of health would be as fatal to the human being as the most pestilential contagion, or the most undermining disorder. Let his ordinary food, by some unusual process of nature, be rendered too nutritious, or by a contrary process, be contaminated, and unless an immediate remedy were afforded by Divine Providence, man would as certainly fall directly into the grave, as if he had been slain by a thunderbolt. Let a contagious disorder spread itself on the earth, and its effects, although more secret, will be as destructive as those of an earthquake or a deluge. Let the mind be distracted with cares and anxieties, and the bodily frame will in general soon be worn down and sink into ruin; or on the other hand, let the nervous system of the body

be deranged and the powers of the mind will be palsied, and the child of reason will become imbecile or insane.

9. Such, then, appears to be the influence of the Divine government in the general order of nature, in the common intercourses of society, and in the arrangements of domestic and private life: the great tendency of all is towards good, and man is often the unconscious, and not unfrequently the involuntary instrument, whereby this good is produced. His ignorance and perverseness cannot thwart or impede the designs of Infinite Benevolence; but his virtue will secure to him all the reward which is due to a faithful and active discharge of those duties, which have been assigned to human Beings by the great Creator and Governor of the universe. This will more clearly appear if we consider in the

10. Second place, the influence of the Divine Government, over the *moral* state of the world.

Innumerable circumstances conspire to prove, that man is placed here in a probationary state, and that he is hereafter to be the subject either of reward or punishment. Such a state not only implies, but plainly demonstrates, the existence of some supreme moral government, from which such a plan of discipline has emanated. Let us trace the moral history of the world, and we shall find as abundant proofs of Divine grace as of divine providence. We shall see not only the temporal, but also the spiritual wants of mankind largely provided for; and shall learn that God is good to all, and that his tender mercies are over all his works; that he has in no age left himself without a witness and that in every period of the world, some striking evidences of Divine truth have been presented to the eyes of mankind, and some means for acquiring religious knowledge afforded. To the world at large, the great book of nature has revealed not only the existence, but the power, the wisdom, and the goodness, of an Eternal First Cause. Natural reason, aided by the common occurrences of human life, plainly demonstrated the superiority of virtue over vice; and the secret testimony of every man's conscience, pointed out the duty and advantage of uprightness; for it would be contrary to nature to suppose, that the human mind could ever be so entirely degraded, as *generally* to mistake vice for virtue, and therefore, the Apostle Paul, when speaking of the Heathen world said—"The invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made, even his Eternal Power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse; because that when they

knew God, they gloried him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened, professing themselves to be wise they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." From the earliest ages of the world, the Patriarchs were favoured with the light of Divine Truth; and their descendants, the Hebrews, were instructed by teachers, raised up by Divine Providence, and peculiarly qualified for their office, by an extraordinary enlargement of the natural powers of their minds. By a series of such extraordinary events, as no human wisdom could have foreseen, truth and virtue were preserved amidst the general corruptions of the world; and from the obscure land of Judea, a light was destined to break forth, which should enlighten the whole earth with its rays. When the fulness of time was come, and when by a long state of moral darkness, the imperfection of human wisdom had been made clearly manifest, the pure and exalted doctrines of the gospel were proclaimed and propagated both among Jews and Gentiles, without the aid of human power, or of human learning; and it pleased God, by what was termed the foolishness of the cross, to save them that believed. God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets; in the latter days spake to mankind by his Son, whom he hath appointed Heir of all things. We see, that from the earliest ages of the world, a grand design for the exercise and purification of human virtue; the advancement of religious knowledge: and the establishment of the present comfort and eternal happiness of mankind, has been begun and carried on in the world, by abundant dispensations of divine providence and grace. We continually behold incontrovertible proofs, that even the present fruits of virtue are peace; and we have no room left for doubting, whether its future rewards will be perfect and eternal happiness. A life of virtue naturally produces that peace of mind which passeth all understanding, and it will prove a substantial qualification for that state of intellectual enjoyment, which is future and eternal; whereas, on the other hand, vice has a natural and necessary connection with misery, as it affords a perpetual source of self-reproach, and disqualifies those who are under its influence, for the enjoyment of those pleasures which are pure and spiritual in their nature. In that gospel which has been revealed to man, virtue is exhibited in all its

beauty, and vice in all its deformity; the Divine perfections are displayed in unrivalled glory, and the nature, the duties, and the final destiny of man, are clearly demonstrated. The most perfect rules are laid down for his government, in all the varying scenes of life; the purest sources of consolation are opened to his mind when in affliction; and the brightest hopes and prospects are set before him. when drawing near to the borders of the grave. In the revelation of the gospel, then, and the mission of Jesus Christ to the world, we not only see a clear evidence of God's moral dispensation of grace to the world, but the richest of those dispensations also brought home to our bosoms, and adapted to our own circumstances and wants. Amidst the proofs of mortality with which we are surrounded, we behold life and immortality clearly brought to light—amidst the cares and anxieties of this probationary scene, we are supported by the assurance, that there remaineth a rest for the people of God—and amidst the severest trials of our virtue, it is demonstrated, that we shall assuredly reap, if we faint not. But besides the express revelation of the gospel, the common discipline of affliction affords to the human race an incontrovertible proof of the Divine moral government in the world. To the lessons of this school, the greater part of the Heathens were not altogether blind: they seemed aware of their importance, but were grossly deluded with respect to the source from which they proceeded; instead of attributing them to the paternal discipline of one All-perfect and Omnipotent Governor, they considered the afflictions of life as the visitations of a multiplicity of Gods, whom their imaginations had painted, as infected with some of the vices of the human character; and, therefore, although observation had demonstrated the importance of afflictions, in ameliorating the temper. and strengthening the mind, yet, when they were viewed as proceeding from such a corrupted source, they could have little or no moral influence on the heart. Reason, if it were not poisoned by a debasing mythology, would of itself point out some important and specific objects to be answered by the afflictions of life; and if even the most virtuous of mankind were to be exempt from such trials, the evidence of a Divine revelation would be considerably weakened. If there were no interruptions of our present enjoyment, strong doubts would not unhanaturally rise in the minds of many, respecting the reality of a future state; and it might not irrationally be concluded, that this life was to be the whole of man's existence, because a strong indication would

be afforded, that sensitive gratification was intended to be the summit of human felicity. It would then be natural to conclude, that an uninterrupted stream of enjoyment was poured into the cup of life, because man had no practical lessons of virtue to learn, and no future state of existence to expect. But the case becomes widely different, when we are assured, that man is a probationary being—when this life is considered as only the beginning of his existence—and when this world is acknowledged to be a school for the attainment of higher degrees in knowledge and virtue. Afflictions and trials, then, are not only useful, but necessary to the moral advancement of the human race; and accordingly they are by the revelation of the gospel declared to be the clearest evidence of the Divine Paternal administration—the most powerful correctives of human error, as well as stimulants to more perfect virtue, and demonstrative proofs of a rest which remaineth for the people of God. To a mind already perfect, no *temptations* would be necessary to try the strength of its virtue; but one in which religious principles are to be formed into permanent habits, they are important instruments for establishing and strengthening virtuous dispositions in the heart; and the same observation applies to the *afflictions* of life. If man were to experience no disappointments and sorrows, there could be no evidence of patience, fortitude, resignation, and other important dispositions, which conspire to qualify the children of frailty for the mansions of eternal felicity.

11. Let us, then, devoutly employ the powers of our minds in tracing the exalted perfections of our benevolent Creator in the works of nature, and in the rich dispensations of his providence and grace. While in this state of probation, let us zealously attend to the exalted lessons of Divine Wisdom, which are afforded at every step of our journey; and constantly directing our eyes towards the example of him, who is the Author and Finisher of our faith; let us run with patience the race that is set before us, that we may at last lay hold on eternal life, and receive that crown of glory which the Lord the righteous Judge will bestow upon all those who love his appearing.

In the first paragraph, the Reverend Lecturer applies the term “fool” to those whom he calls, “Infidels in practice” by which he evidently implies that “Vice is the proper practice.”
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tice of the infidel." That this implication is far from being borne out by either history or experience, I shall not stop to prove; indeed he himself expressly admits that there have been, and still are, "infidels in theory," who are unimpeachable in their moral conduct." These appear to be considered as exceptions to the general rule, otherwise he cannot be consistent in supposing vice to be the legitimate offspring of infidelity. That the philosophic unbelievers should have been numerous, in the ancient world, prior to the promulgation of Christianity does not strike him with wonder, and the few sages who differed in their speculations from the rest are reckoned as splendid exceptions to the great number. I might here invite a comparison between the morals of the ancient believers and unbelievers, which I think would not greatly disgrace the latter.

The second paragraph contains an allusion to the progress made by Socrates, Plato, Cicero and other philosophers in the knowledge and belief, of a supreme Being, and an Eulogium on Cicero's celebrated treatise "concerning the Nature of the God." There does not appear in this any thing that requires an answer.

The assertion contained in the third paragraph respecting "the innumerable proofs of divine power wisdom and goodness every where displayed in the works of nature" I shall reserve for consideration till I come to the sixth and following paragraphs. The Reverend Lecturer is evidently under a mistake in regarding the Count de Mirabeau as the author of the "System of Nature;" (a treatise which he does not mention by name, but evidently alludes to it) not that it is matter of great moment who was the author, only that it may be as well to correct a false impression, as far as possible. It was first published I believe with the name of Jean Baptiste Mirabaud, as the author, about the year 1770, and the similarity of the name has doubtless led to the mistake. Voltaire calls him, I think, the Secretary to the French Academy, but says he had not the talent to write a single page of the treatise. I believe it is now generally ascribed to Baron d'Holbach. So far as to the authorship. I shall now examine the charge of obliquity of judgment made upon the "French Atheist" respecting his denial of the existence of a superintending Deity. I shall pass by the old story of the elephant, eagle and tortoise, and prepare to come to the argument. The Lecturer contends for the existence, or rather the belief in the existence of a "self exist-

ent, omnipotent and omniscient Deity," and the French philosopher, he says, rather than acknowledge such a being, "boldly introduces a heterogeneous creature of his own fancy, which he calls nature, and considers as the prolific, bountiful and instinctive mother of all things." The Reverend Lecturer acknowledges the Deity to be quite incomprehensible, but still insists that such a being must be the Creator of all things, and he infers the existence of this being, to whom he ascribes unlimited perfections, from the appearances exhibited in the world, and though order and disorder, virtue and vice strike his eye in every direction, yet he overlooks the conclusion which an unprejudiced observer would draw from such an assemblage of mixt phenomena. Attachment to a particular system, or predilection for a favourite hypothesis, which they dress in splendid but unnatural drapery, has prevented some of the best men from perceiving the blemishes and defects which a less biassed observer can easily detect; nay so far has fondness for a beloved theory led some, that, when the faults of their idol have been clearly pointed out, rather than relinquish their admiration of their adored object, they have absolutely contended that every fault was an additional beauty. In such minds, truth becomes unfortunately a secondary object, and though men of very respectable talents and attainments are frequently found combatting in the ranks of error, and for the existence of a system, yet we are not thence to infer that they in general would continue such contest, were the fallacy of their opinions evident to themselves. Yet we often find that education, passion and external circumstances have a powerful influence in bewildering the minds of very honest and well intentioned individuals. But however gaudily a hypothesis may be drest, the Philosopher ought not for a moment to be dazzled by the meretricious glitter, "he should," as Dr. Chalmers observes, "be prepared to follow the light of evidence, though it may lead him to conclusions the most painful and melancholy; he should train his mind to all the hardihood of abstract and unfeeling intelligence; he should give up every thing to the supremacy of argument, and be able to renounce without a sigh all the tenderest prepossessions of infancy, the moment that truth demands of him the sacrifice."—(Evidences of Christianity, chap. i. p. 21.) The French Philosopher considers nature or the material universe as the uncaused, self existent being, and the question between the Reverend Lecturer and him is which

theory is the most philosophical. Take a watch—we infer from its structure and purpose that it had a maker; experience tells us that its maker must have been an intelligent being whom we term man; we then find that man is a much more complicated machine than a watch, and our next inquiry is who made man? Here experience deserts us. We see a regular succession of men and women, but no one can shew us their origin. Well, as experience is no guide, we endeavour to solve the question by analogy. Here we are precisely as much in the dark as ever for though we infer that machinery of a kind, quite new to us, is made by a machinist, yet we have never seen any animal created, and therefore have no good ground to infer a creator. But however, as it was evident, there were powers in nature with which mankind were unacquainted, and which in the rude periods of society seemed wielded by invisible but capricious hands, the notion of an intelligent but incomprehensible being arose, and thus, perhaps, as Lucretius says, “fear first made Gods in the world.” This notion thus originating, and afterwards so successfully propagated in so many shapes and by so many means, acquired a firm footing in the world, and all who were bold enough to question the received dogmas of Priests and Statesmen were persecuted as monsters. Well, we have at length, arrived at the popular reason for belief in the existence of a Deity, though it is impossible to find any agreement among the various sects in the different religions in the world respecting him, but that he is entirely incomprehensible. If you admit that this Deity made man and the universe, but venture to inquire into the origin of his existence, you are directly told that he is an uncaused, self-existent and eternal being, omnipresent, omnipotent, immutable and infinitely wise and benevolent. The French Philosopher having this theory before him, and perceiving, as he imagined, its complete variance with facts and experience, had the honesty to examine it and to expose its fallacy. He could see no reason for admitting more causes than were necessary to produce the effects observed, and not being able to see the impression of any other hand in nature than matter and motion, rejected what he considered as superfluous. The believer says, mankind or the universe cannot have existed without a cause, but he says that the cause of mankind and the universe requires no cause. This uncaused first cause he says is infinitely superior to the universe of matter, but acknow-

ledges it to be quite incomprehensible. He also allows that the essence of matter is quite as incomprehensible as the nature of the Deity, but he decides without hesitation that the one requires a cause and the other no cause for its existence. The unbeliever guided solely by experience and analogy looks upon matter as eternally existing, for he can find no evidence of its commencement. He invests it with no attributes which contradict acknowledged facts, and so long as he finds disorder, vice and misery making up so large a portion of the ingredients in the world, he cannot infer infinite power wisdom and bevolence to be among its attributes. He cannot perceive any incongruity in ascribing to matter the powers and qualities of which he finds it possessed, nor can he see the necessity of deriving those powers and qualities from another being, who can neither be seen, heard, felt nor understood, is cognizable by no one sense, by those who talk most loudly about him, is declared to be totally incomprehensible even to themselves. Who then is it ought to be charged with being shallow and unphilosophical? He who he is guided by experience and analogy, or he who deserts those safe and certain paths, and roams into the regions of conjecture, and dogmatically demands the credit of his fellow men to the narrations of his own fancy?

With respect to moral virtue being derived from motives of expedience and utility by the French Philosopher, I believe he is far from being alone in his opinion; men of very different sentiments from him have both preceded and followed him. I am of opinion, that if the question were fairly understood, and the ambiguity of the language employed, removed, there would be very little difference in the sentiments of philosophers. Those who contend that right and not utility ought to be the foundation of morals, also contend that what is right is useful, and what is wrong detrimental to mankind, while those who assert that utility is the proper basis of morals, also assent that what is useful is right, and I do not know of any one who admits any thing to be right, and denies its utility or wrong and defends it. It is man's interest to be virtuous, and he who understands his interest best, is most virtuous. I think the Reverend Lecturer will not deny this plain proposition. Yet in the very same page he endeavours to so prove that the consciousness of integrity to a well constituted mind without the prospect of future reward would be an insuffi-

cient stimulus to virtuous conduct. This is admitting that vice has more charms to a well constituted mind than virtue, which is an admission that this world is so imperfectly made by the incomprehensible Deity, that the prospect of future reward is necessary to prevent his creatures from making themselves miserable by becoming vicious.

A man perfectly aware of the supreme advantages of virtue would be virtuous in consequence of his knowledge, but an ignorant man would not be virtuous from the contemplation of future reward, if the practice of vice presented present gratification. It is not the prospect of remote pleasure but of proximate pain, that operates most powerfully upon the bulk of mankind. The Christian religion promises rewards after this life, for the performance of certain deeds or the belief of certain tenets; and threatens punishments for neglect or unbelief. But the rewards and punishments are so indefinite and uncertain and apparently so remote, that their hold upon the minds of professors is extremely slender. They begin to operate most when they are of least use to mankind, on the death-bed; and then, notwithstanding the golden glories in which a future life is dressed, the generality of believers meet death more with apprehension and fear than with hope and joy. The incomprehensible nature of the being the believer expects to meet, is more calculated to impress him with dread, than confidence. If he draws his notions of the almighty despot from the events in this lower world, are they not more likely to produce the expectation of a capricious tyrant than a beneficent sovereign? The theory of the Reverend Lecturer respecting the Deity appears very amiable, but unfortunately both general and particular history concurs in rejecting it. The picture is beautifully drawn, highly coloured, and elegantly ornamented, but so far from being a likeness, it may be called a splendid caricature. It is like drawing Alecto with the features and person of Venus.

The remarks just made will serve for an answer to the greatest part of the fourth paragraph, but the sentence re-

specting "the powerful influence of Christian precepts and motives in the advancement and perfection of human virtue" merits some little notice. We of course ought to expect this advancement and perfection to be most apparent in those whose chief business it is to study and disseminate the Doctrines of Christianity, and most particularly among those whose worldly interest it evidently is to exhibit in their own persons, the boasted result of its precepts and motives. From men who are enjoying every temporal happiness and living in wealth and splendour, as a salary for their preeminent piety and virtue, one might at least expect that, if they did not possess these perfections in reality, yet, regard for their own reputation would induce them at least to personate their appearance. But what is the glaring fact? Search the records of ecclesiastical history, and find me men more debased than the generality of rich and elevated Priests. Who have had less regard even to external decency than these men? How little influence have these *powerful* motives and precepts had amongst the clergy in power! Where has the bitterness of persecution equalled that of the clergy? What wars have been carried on with a tithe of the vindictiveness of those called religious wars, begun for the glory of God and abetted by those who arrogate to themselves his special regard? None have been so arrogant as the priests in power, none have used baser means to attain it and none have abused it more when attained. That there have been men among the clergy who have been an honour to their species, I readily and cheerfully admit, but it would not be difficult to trace their virtues to other causes than to christianity. They are *splendid exceptions* to the general mass, and leaving Christianity out of the question, and other circumstances remaining, they still would have been virtuous and amiable men. The reverend lecturer having painted for himself a beautiful picture of futurity, turns with horror from the other side of the imaginary canvas. But it is every man's duty to endeavour to view the landscape as it really is, and he will always find truth and nature charming

He may wish for various things, but he must not act as if things were as he desired, but conform himself to the reality. It would be foolish in a man whose yearly income is but £100, to believe because he wished it, that he had one of as many thousands, and go into the world, and make contracts accordingly.

The fifth paragraph I consider already answered.

We come now to the sixth paragraph, and were I not well aware that this Lecture was delivered for the express purpose of proving that the world was divinely governed, I should almost be tempted to suppose that part of this and the two succeeding paragraphs were intended for grave irony; but as I have before observed, the best of men, by attachment to a system, may be blind to its most obvious defects, and even fancy its blemishes to be beauties. Else why ever imagine that an all wise and powerful being, could, in the construction and government of the universe, have occasion to resort to "checks and counterpoises to the overwhelming power of general laws," and that it actually requires his constant superintendence to prevent the universal system being involved in disorder and ruin. This is making sad work with creation! What has the all wise creator so formed the world that if left to itself, it has a tendency to nothing but disorder and ruin? A clock maker would be ashamed if such a charge could be established against his work. And where is that wisdom of contrivance, and benevolence of design, that is obliged to resort to the creation of ferocious animals to check the "general tendency to increase which would destroy the accuracy and necessary balance of nature?" I feel, here, no necessity for argument, and shall leave this paragraph to be, as I am sure it will be, its own confutation.

In the seventh paragraph, under a general notice of "the wars and contests which arise among civilized nations," where "man becomes the fiercest enemy of man," it is remarked that "even in those changes which the bad passions of men occasion among the nations of the earth, the

power, wisdom, and goodness of God are continually displayed; although to an inattentive observer such events may appear to be serious impeachments of the Divine perfections." Here it is evident that the Reverend Lecturer has a suspicion that the ground he stands on is not so solid as is desirable. He must be a very inattentive observer, indeed, who can infer either wisdom or goodness in the author of wars and bloodshed. The survey of that observer must surely be of the most comprehensive sort who can see kindness and benevolence manifested in the groans of the wounded and dying, but he who should venture to proclaim such a result from his extensive view would be hooted out of society. Such a stretch of observation must lead him far beyond the limits of reality, and his conclusions must be drawn entirely from the dreams of a wild and exuberant fancy. A successful general may, as a reward for a victory, be clothed with honour and presented with wealth, and to him it may be a benefit, but where is the remuneration to the hundreds and thousands who are mangled and cut to pieces in the horrible struggle! Where is the consolation to the widows and orphans of the poor murdered soldiers! Here is plenty of matter, let me see infinite benevolence extracted from it.

I agree with the statement in the eighth paragraph which represents the present general state of the world to be superior to any past state which history has recorded. But I do not allow that it has always been in a progressive state of amelioration. The state of society in Greece and Rome during the bright periods of their history was much superior to any produced by the barbarism that followed, notwithstanding the enlightening power and divine doctrines of Christianity; for in spite of its "powerful precepts and motives," we find an immense retrogression in the civilized world, which certainly would not have been the case had infinite wisdom and power been the manager. Why the world is in a better state now than formerly, is in consequence of the general increase of knowledge, and the causes of its gradual

progress in virtue and happiness (which yet are nothing to boast of) may be easily traced even by a cursory observer, without referring them to any thing supernatural. When mankind were immersed in ignorance, their rulers, who were ambitious or revengful, plunged into war without consulting their subjects, scarcely more than a grazier consults his cattle when he drives them from one place to another; but in proportion as mankind acquired knowledge and became competent to examine the conduct of the governing few, the latter found it necessary to produce some plausible pretext for their plans of aggrandisement, and we all know that none has been a more potent war-whoop than the cry of "For God and our holy religion." The absurd cry of "No Popery" originated in the same pernicious source. They have both been clamoured by the interested and tyrannical, either with a view to obtain what belongs to others, or to prevent others obtaining their own. Nothing has been so convenient a pretext for avarice and oppression to venal and ambitious statesmen for many centuries as religion; it is an undefinable mysterious thing and the examination of it is too complicated and laborious a task for the ignorant and indolent. Knowledge will deprive rulers of this plausible pretence in time, and when subjects become wise, "War is a game that Kings will not play at." There is an admission in this paragraph that the ways of Providence must necessarily appear dark and and mysterious, and, that time alone can develop the vast plans of providence; and after this it seems rather hard that the unbeliever should be taxed with absurdity, because he cannot infer divine wisdom and benevolence from darkness and mystery. Why must he be considered an unphilosophical rhapsodist, because he cannot perceive kindness and fatherly love in the devastation of an earthquake, nor the care of a wise and benevolent ruler in shipwrecks and tornadoes? Why must a man be told that he is unreasonable because he does not invert the usual modes of reasoning, and conclude that the plague and yellow fever are proofs that the benevolent father of all wishes to

infuse health into his children? To be sure, if we adopt this excellent logic, proofs of divine wisdom and benevolence will be particularly easy, and amazingly numerous!

My remarks upon the remaining paragraphs shall be short. The Reverend Lecturer rather assumes than proves that man is placed here in a probationary state. He ought rather to have proved that there was another state for which mankind were preparing than to infer it from the progress of any religion. Indeed, as a Unitarian Minister, I think the facts are strongly against him. The Unitarians contend that the religion of Jesus Christ was Unitarian, but how little progress has this true doctrine made? If, as they insist, it was the doctrine of the Apostles and the early fathers, how did it happen, that in the middle and later centuries, it was almost unknown amongst professing Christians? I know, that a natural solution can be readily given to the question; but then what becomes of the argument for the gradual progress of (true) religion? This doctrine has more adherents probably now than it ever had; but it is still regarded by the bulk of professing Christian as "the half-way house to infidelity." If true religion thus retrogrades at one period (and that too always under the divine superintendence) what assurance can the believer have that at a future time, it will cover the whole earth? In the tenth paragraph, the Reverend Lecturer says, that "a life of virtue naturally produces that peace of mind which passeth all understanding," and that vice has a "natural and necessary connection with misery." This is a point I contended for in remarking on the third paragraph of the Lecture, and I am very happy to find so exact an agreement between us at last. In that paragraph, the Lecturer contended that the consideration of virtue itself, or conscious integrity did not afford a sufficient stimulus to its practice without the prospect of future reward. I shall merely refer to my remarks on that part of the Lecture. I do not concur in the assertion that the most perfect rules are laid down in the gospel for the government of man. I see in it a mixture of good and mischievous pre-

cepts, scattered rules, but nothing like a system of morals. The analysis has been executed by very able hands, and had it not, it does not fall within the scope of the present remarks, which have already grown to a length I did not anticipate.

The tenth paragraph is intended to prove the Divine influence over the moral state of the world, and it appears to the Reverend Lecturer, that because "truth and virtue were preserved amidst the general corruption of the world," and that in the process of time "the pure and exalted doctrines of the Gospel were proclaimed and propagated both among Jews and Gentiles without the aid of human power or human learning" the moral government of an eternal, wise, and powerful First Cause is evident. To an unprejudiced observer, general corruption and moral darkness would appear to have originated in any sort of a cause but an all wise and powerful being, and the partial benefits conferred by the gospel, seem more like the efforts of an ignorant and imbecile being, than the gifts of an infinitely powerful and benevolent Deity. Besides, when the true doctrine of Jesus Christ was so completely overwhelmed by the corruptions of Christianity as it was after the second century, of what use were the "pure and exalted doctrines of the gospel"? Were there ever more absurd or contradictory dogmas propagated or believed by the most superstitious among the Pagans, than were promulgated, wrangled, and fought for, among the Christians? Who but the votary of a system can perceive in these things, the evidence of a divine government in the affairs of the world? That Christianity was propagated without the aid of human power or of human learning is not strictly correct. St. Paul was evidently a man both of great natural abilities and acquired talents, and to him I think may be ascribed the first impetus it received, and, among an ignorant and barbarous populace, it was never difficult to find numerous followers to any religion or sect of religion. Some have sunk into oblivion, others have weathered the untoward events and persecutions they had to grapple with, and triumphed in their victories. But it

does not thence follow that they are true, for then the most contradictory systems would be true, and every one in its turn. "Afflictions and trials," it is said, "are not only useful but necessary to the moral advancement of the human race." Then, of course, it was beyond the power of this all powerful being to dispense with misery in the world. He had no means to compass the future happiness of mankind but by their present unhappiness. I am, therefore, to conclude that the evils suffered in this life are to prepare us for blessings in the next, and this I am told is sound reasoning, and if I reason otherwise, I am set down as absurd and ridiculous. I should, if left to my own reasoning, suppose that if a wise and benevolent Deity afflicted me with the tooth-ach and the rheumatism here, for my good, that, in another world, he would add the stone and the gout; and the greater the good he intended me, I should expect it to be preceded or accompanied by greater or more numerous similar marks of his kindness. Cannot the Deity prevent evil? Then where is his power? If he can, and will not, where is his benevolence? If he has not the power or the will to do it here, why am I to conclude that he can or will do it hereafter?

I flatter myself I have not been uncourteous in my remarks, for nothing is farther from my intention than to give offence. I have, I imagine, argued fairly, and as I am tied to no system, I do not care how soon my arguments are satisfactorily answered. Truth is the only Deity I worship, and I am ready to embrace her whenever or however she presents herself.

COPY OF A LETTER SENT TO THE KING,
CARLTON PALACE.

SIR,

Dorchester Gaol, June 16, 1825.

I THINK, that my proposition for the settlement of Catholic Emancipation is by far the best. They of the Roman Catholic who seek office, and the mass care nothing about the matter, object to an acknowledgement of your spiritual supremacy, on the ground, that it excludes their acknowledgment of the spiritual supremacy of the Pope. I certainly put the affair on a better ground, in saying, that spiritual supremacy is *no* supremacy and that the supremacy of the Pope over the Catholics is doctrinal and not spiritual. If the leading men among the Catholics will but consent to call your supremacy *spiritual*, and that of the Pope *doctrinal*, every thing on that head will have its right name and the whole of this nonsensical clamour about Catholic Emancipation be put down.

No-Popery is a very sensible cry and I hope it will never cease whilst popery exists. NO POPERY! DOWN WITH THE POPE! And then —

I may not be your prisoner,

RICHARD CARLILE.

COPY OF A LETTER SENT TO THE KING,
CARLTON PALACE.

SIR,

Dorchester Gaol, June 21, 1825.

SOMETHING will evidently be soon done as to epitomizing our statute laws. Your ministers begin to talk about it. I, being a meddler with every thing, have my plan for this subject.

Let a commission be appointed, of one or more, to examine the statutes, by centuries of years, beginning with the beginning and making a period at the close of each century. There may be five, six, or seven centuries to go through. From the statutes of each century, let every thing that is good and applicable to the present time be culled as exceptions, and the remainder repealed as bad, useless or obsolete. A simple act for each century, repealing the whole of the statutes for that century, with such and such exceptions, noting the exceptions particularly, and the statutes repealed as a mass before a particular time, would be sufficient. This would not be the work of many months, for a competent individual.

Then, from all the unrepealed exceptions, of all the centuries, let a code be formed. Thus, we shall have all the wisdom of our ancestors added to our own, while we get rid of all the mischiefs which they have entailed upon us.

But nothing will be effectually good, that shall not abolish that abominable tyranny, that source of corruption to our Judges, that burlesque of law called *common law*.

I am, Sir, your prisoner,

RICHARD CARLILE.

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